

Meeting of the Pennsylvania Governor's Invasive Species Council  
Tuesday, September 15, 2020 | 10:00am  
Virtual Skype Meeting

*\* All text in italics indicates additional information included by the minute taker.*

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**Council Members Present:** Amy Jewitt, Andrew Ernst, Andrew Rohrbaugh, Chris Urban, Donald Eggen, Felicia Lamphere, Fred Strathmeyer, James Grazio, Jeff Wagner, Kate Harms, Kevin Hess, Kimberly Bohn, Kristopher Abell, Lisa Murphy, Piper Sherburne, Ruth Welliver, Sara Stahlman, Sarah Whitney, Scott Bearer

**Other Participants Present:** April Moore, Brant Portner, Destiny Zeiders, Donna Marie Foster, Grant DeCosta, Heather Smith, Jocelyn Behm, Jody Groshek, Johan Berger, Johnny Zook, Jonathan Geyer, Kate Wehler, Kendra McMillin, Maddie Stanisch, Mary Cortese, Mary Walsh, Matthew Helmus, Melissa Harrison, Michael Nerozzi, Nick Decker, Nicole Faraguna, Shea Zwerver, Stephen Rudman, Tamara Peffer, Tom Cermak, Trilby Libhart, Victoria Challengsworth

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**Welcome and Introductory Remarks**

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) welcomed everyone to the meeting, gave introductory remarks, and apologized that the group couldn't be together in person (due to the continued pandemic). Fred mentioned that he's very proud of the Council as a whole and thankful for the work that Kris Abell (PDA) and all subcommittee members are doing to advance the important work of the Council. All of the Council's work ties into the influence this group has in Pennsylvania as well as the surrounding region when it comes to invasive species issues.

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**Announcements and Roll Call**

Fred Strathmeyer did the member roll call. He asked all others present to email Amy Jewitt (WPC/PNHP), the PISC recording secretary, so their attendance could be noted in the meeting minutes.

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**Coordinator Report**

*Approval of June Meeting Minutes*

Kris Abell (PDA) requested the meeting minutes from the June Pennsylvania Governor's Invasive Species Council (PISC) meeting be approved. These minutes were posted on the PDA/PISC website and sent via email to all Council members prior to today's meeting.

**MOTION:** Jeff Wagner (WPC/PNHP) moved to approve the June PISC minutes. Lisa Murphy (UPenn) seconded the motion. **Motion approved.**

### ***Follow-Up: Resignation of Two Council Members***

During the June PISC meeting, Kris mentioned that Keith Fisher (TNC) and Marci Mowery (PA Parks and Forests Foundation) were both resigning from the Council (both they and their organizations), and that Council members had wanted to know why. Kris reached out to both Keith and Marci and got their responses, but for both, it was a matter of not being able to commit the time needed to be involved. Specific responses from each individual are below:

Keith Fisher, Nature Conservancy: "Personnel capacity is stretched thin. Can't formally participate in the Council, but would still like to receive email updates, play an active role in the PRISM program, and provide assistance to the Council when needed."

Marci Mowery, PA Parks and Forests Foundation: "Difficult to commit to doing the work of the Council. I am the only full-time employee and the only one with any background on invasive species."

### ***Opportunity to Nominate New Council Members***

Kris Abell mentioned that we now have the opportunity to discuss if we would like to nominate new organizations to the Council.

### ***APIPMA Nomination***

Kate Harms (PALMS) sent an email (last week) formally nominating the Allegheny Plateau Invasive Plant Management Area (APIPMA) as a new member of PISC. *(Note: On the screen Kris was sharing during the meeting were the names of four potential organizations that Council members previously suggested as potential new nominees, prior to today's meeting. They included: Wildlands Conservancy, Natural Lands, PA Hardwoods Council, and Temple University.)*

Council members discussed the APIPMA nomination.

Jeff Wagner (WPC/PNHP) mentioned that Cooperative Weed Management Areas (CWMAs) *(which the APIPMA is a CWMA)* are not actually organizations, but rather partnerships comprised of multiple organizations, and wondered if this had any significance regarding whether or not APIPMA could be nominated as an official Council member.

Andrew Rohrbaugh (DCNR BOF) supported the APIPMA nomination, but was concerned that the Council would then need to formally invite all other active CWMAs in Pennsylvania to be official members of PISC, and this might be a bit much as far as more members on the Council.

Piper Sherburne (PACD) also supported the nomination, but was unsure of the way in which people are nominated to be part of the Council. Kris Abell provided clarification on the formal nomination process.

Andrew Ernst (PA Farm Bureau) inquired about APIPMA's willingness to be active on the Council. Maddie Stanisch (APIPMA/MCCD) confirmed that she is interested in being nominated to represent APIPMA on the Council and would participate in any and all PISC-related meetings.

Jeff Wagner agreed with Andrew Rohrbaugh, reiterating Andrew's question – would the other active CWMAs/CISMAs automatically be invited to also be members of PISC? Jeff also mentioned that several people involved in the Lake Erie Watershed CWMA (i.e., WPC, PA Sea Grant, and DCNR) are already members on the Council, and this could present a problem by “double representing ourselves”. Essentially, we could be representing a bunch of organizations that are already being represented on the Council if we agree to allow a CWMA to be an official member of PISC.

Amy Jewitt (WPC/PNHP) asked if the APIPMA nomination could be modified to instead be for the McKean County Conservation District (MCCD), since both Maddie Stanisch and Jody Groshek (leaders of APIPMA) work for the MCCD.

In response to Amy's suggestion, Jody Groshek (MCCD) clarified that though Maddie Stanisch would be representing both the MCCD and the APIPMA as a member of PISC, she would mainly be representing APIPMA, not conservation districts. (*In other words, the nomination should not be modified as suggested by Amy.*)

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) mentioned that the Hardwoods Council has a system in place where its current utilization groups (3 in total) have an alternating seat on their council (*alluding to a potential idea of having an alternating seat for CWMA leaders on PISC*). Fred also stressed the importance of “keeping your doors wide open” as far as inviting any and all groups to be part of PISC that are knowledgeable on invasive species issues and are willing to participate in the work being done by the Council, especially with building out the concept for PRISMs in Pennsylvania. Overall, we tend to benefit from including people (*rather than not*). At the very least, inviting CWMA leaders and other participants to attend PISC meetings would be beneficial to the Council.

Per the above discussion, Andrew Rohrbaugh said the pros outweighed the cons (*of having more CWMAs be part of PISC than not*), so he withdrew his original question/concern on this topic.

Jeff Wagner commented that based on Fred's earlier comment (*regarding an alternating seat on the Council for CWMAs*), we could consider inviting the other four active CWMAs in Pennsylvania to join the Council too.

Ruth Welliver (PDA) pointed out that according to the Executive Order that formed the Council, there can only be a certain number of official members elected to serve on the Council. That may be a reason for having CWMAs/CISMAs have a rotating seat on the Council (and not to keep involvement limited to just one CWMA/partnership).

Kris Abell (PDA) clarified that based on the Executive Order, up to 14 organizations representing the general public may be elected to serve on the Council (in addition to the seven state agencies also elected to serve). As of today, that leaves four open spots on the Council to be filled. *(Note: See amendment at the conclusion of these minutes regarding updated information on the actual number of open seats available on the Council. Information listed in these minutes was later found to be inaccurate.)*

Piper Sherburne (PACD) inquired if the APIPMA nomination could be amended to include language related to having a revolving seat for CWMAs/CISMAs on the Council (*in other words, Maddie would rotate her position with other CWMA leaders on an agreed-upon basis*). Fred Strathmeyer responded, saying that since other CWMAs have not yet been approached to know if they would also like to be members of the Council (on a rotating basis) or if they have the capacity to participate, amending the nomination should not be done right now.

Kris Abell mentioned that contact had also been made with Temple University about being considered as another new member of the Council.

Jeff Wagner commented that if we're limited to a certain number of seats that can be filled at this time, are there specific kinds of groups or functions that we want to add to the Council that have been lost? For example, since TNC resigned, should we consider adding another entity to the Council from the land trust community?

**MOTION:** Kate Harms moved to formally nominate the Allegheny Plateau Invasive Plant Management Area (APIPMA) to be a new member on the Pennsylvania Governor's Invasive Species Council (PISC), with Maddie Stanisch being the elected as the APIPMA representative. Donald Eggen (DCNR BOF) seconded the motion. **Motion approved.**

### ***Temple University Nomination***

Amy Jewitt continued the conversation by formally nominating Temple University as another new member on the Council. Representatives from Temple University on today's call (Jocelyn Behm and Matthew Helmus) expressed their excitement regarding this nomination, but said they would be willing to wait on being formally nominated to the Council if a subcommittee needed to be formed to identify current membership voids on the Council.

Council members discussed the Temple University nomination.

Sarah Whitney (PA Sea Grant) asked if the Council would be nominating the organization (Temple University), or specific individuals from Temple University to be elected as new members? Kris Abell clarified that according to the Executive Order, we would need to nominate the organization, not necessarily specific people. But if there are specific people that are willing to serve on the Council from Temple University – which in this case there are – then we would likely include that information in the nomination too.

Donald Eggen (DCNR BOF) suggested forming a Nomination Committee to help provide insight into filling the remaining seats on the Council.

**ACTION ITEM:** Kris Abell said that the Council would form a Nomination Committee immediately.

**MOTION:** Amy Jewitt moved to formally nominate Temple University to be a new member on the Pennsylvania Governor’s Invasive Species Council (PISC). Kimberly Bohn (Penn State University) seconded the motion. Based on feedback in the Skype Chat box (*the mode of voting during the Council’s virtual meeting today*), several people asked that we wait on a decision for this nomination until additional information could be provided for Council members to make a more informed vote (*though there were a few “yes” votes in favor of the nomination*). **Motion tabled until the December 2020 PISC meeting.**

Following the above-mentioned action item (*of forming a Nomination Committee to identify and fill voids in Council membership*), Kris Abell asked if anyone present on today’s meeting would like to participate in this new Committee? Jeff Wagner (WPC/PNHP) volunteered along with Kate Harms (PALMS) and Felicia Lamphere (PA DEP).

Kris Abell formally welcomed APIPMA as a new member to the Council, and thanked them for their willingness to serve.

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### **Conservation District Involvement with a Potential Future Invasive Species Management Program in Pennsylvania**

Presenter: Piper Sherburne (Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts)

Piper mentioned that she had several talking points, not necessarily a presentation, to give on this topic. She opened by mentioning that the Department of Interior (DOI) is looking for public comments on their Invasive Species Management Plan.

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) is going to:

- Continue working to develop and maintain a common invasive species database to serve as a portal/clearinghouse on their national website.

- Move invasive species policy towards better prevention and control; start the conversation on invasive species policy for the next Farm Bill, with emphasis on rapid response, emerging concerns, and the prevention of economic damage.
- Build a list of talking points to use when meeting with policy makers.
- Develop a media package to increase awareness of invasive species.

At PACD’s July meeting, PACD unanimously voted to encourage the PDA and related agencies to develop a delegated agreement for conservation districts to provide funding and have the authority to battle invasive species (as part of a future PRISM program in PA). Even if funding isn’t provided immediately to fund a PRISM program, conservation districts could begin doing relevant work including surveying for invasive species, establishing and prioritizing a list of resources, coordinating and develop partnerships, creating and distributing a unified message for all state entities and sectors of Pennsylvania, educating the public through the Envirothon and social media (something conservation districts are already doing), and working with the Governor’s office, legislature, and partners to identify permanent funding sources to implement programs.

Piper commented that every conservation district in the state wants to be a part of the PRISM Program! Piper also described in detail what a delegated agreement is and what is involved in implementing one.

Johan Berger (State Conservation Commission [SCC]) commented on PACD’s initiative to work with the Commonwealth on a delegation agreement for invasive species. His comments are as follows:

Delegation agreements are very typical mechanisms for certain state agencies to defer some of their authority down to the local level (where conservation districts work) in order to carry out statewide programs/initiatives. Delegation agreements provide a certain amount of authority (regulatory or non-regulatory); however, they do come with some consequences. For example, if a conservation district can’t perform its duties, the respective agency will talk with the district, and the district may relinquish that delegation authority. One of the advantages of a delegation authority is that it does give some indemnity to a conservation district. For example, if a conservation district is carrying out the duties of a state program (on behalf of that agency/program), and the district were to be sued or taken to court on some issue, the state agency indemnifies their responsibilities/roles and “comes to bat” for the conservation district.

One thing the Council needs to keep in mind: Delegations, in their simplest forms, are usually between two entities: in this case, a state agency and a conservation district. When looking at the diverse membership of PISC (i.e., state, local, and federal agencies), careful consideration must be taken when creating a delegation agreement between a conservation district and the entities involved. This is because each PISC member agency has different invasive species issues to deal with and different approaches to these issues. Therefore, it’s not as simple as constructing a delegation agreement and the parties involved just sign a form. There’s got to be a lot of thought put into the agreement because there’s the potential for overlap between agencies and their

initiatives with conservation districts. In other words, potential conflicts could result (as far as how a conservation district would be involved in carrying out its delegated responsibilities).

Piper Sherburne added to Johan's comments (*above*), saying that with the formation of PRISMs in Pennsylvania, this will aid conservation districts that are already partnering with other agencies to do invasive species work at the local level, but that may appear as though they are going off in their own direction with no common purpose. If conservation districts were to work as a larger group (*a PRISM region*) on invasive species issues and prioritize where money was spent, this would be a better scenario.

Piper mentioned that PACD is currently partnering with the PDA to do work on spotted lanternfly in SE Pennsylvania, and money is being given to all the counties in the SLF quarantine zone to do outreach, education, and control work.

Piper also mentioned that reporting (*of where invasive species are being found in Pennsylvania*) is currently a huge issue in our state (*as an agreement has not yet been made on what statewide data clearinghouse will be utilized by all*). We need to be able to tabulate and see progress being made (*for various invasive species surveys and management efforts*). This is something that the PACD/NACD is working on.

Piper commented that conservation districts have the ability to access both public and private property to conduct "boots on the ground" work with invasive species, something that other organizations may not be able to do. This is an advantage for conservation districts.

Conservation districts are also already doing survey work, GIS mapping, and work with invasive species (i.e., West Nile Virus and tick control), and have many people on staff (with various districts) with specific training on forest and invasive species issues. Folks with specific expertise may be able to offer training to others.

Throughout her presentation, Piper tried to emphasize that so many things could be happening at the local level now through utilization of the conservation districts while we are working to fund the PRISM program in Pennsylvania.

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) commented that a delegated agreement between PDA and the PACD may or may not be an appropriate mechanism to be utilized in regards to the PRISM program, but something similar could be just as good. More conversations will need to occur in order to figure this out. Secretary Redding (PDA), Fred Strathmeyer, and others will be talking with Brenda Shambaugh (PACD) to continue the conversation, and Kris Abell (PDA) will be kept in the loop to report back to others on the Council.

Johan Berger (SCC) commented that Karl Brown (Executive Secretary of PA SCC) should get looped into this conversation as well. Fred Strathmeyer clarified that Karl has already been involved, and will be on the upcoming phone meeting with Secretary Redding and Brenda Shambaugh.

Piper Sherburne mentioned the map which shows the agreed-upon PRISM boundaries, and that there may be some confusion as to which map will be utilized because there have been several

different maps circulating amongst members of the Council of late. In her opinion, whoever is given the money from the legislature (*to fund the PRISM program*), their regional map should be used as a mirror for what the PRISM boundaries look like.

In response to Piper’s comment, Tom Cermak (PA Sea Grant) commented that a vote was already taken regarding PRISM boundaries during the most recent PRISM workgroup meeting, and it was decided to use the PDA districts as the PRISM boundaries.

Kris Abell clarified that, yes, an informal vote was taken during the most recent PRISM workgroup meeting, to recommend to the Council (*today*) that PDA regions be utilized as the PRISM boundaries. However, some “behind the scenes” discussion from individual agencies has since occurred. Speaking to DCNR, folks from this organization now have a slightly different viewpoint on PRISM boundaries (*and the overall approach to creating PRISMs in our state*) following the most recent PRISM workgroup meeting where that vote was taken.

As a follow-up to Piper’s presentation, Andrew Rohrbaugh (DCNR BOF) will be presenting to the Council (*today*) on why the DCNR vote changed (*regarding what map should be used for the PRISM boundaries*).

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### **PRISM Workgroup Update**

#### ***DCNR’s Suggested Approach for Formation of PRISMs in Pennsylvania***

Andrew Rohrbaugh (DCNR BOF) started off the conversation. He commented that after the most recent PRISM workgroup meeting (*where an informal vote was taken and it was decided to recommend to the Council that PDA’s regional map be used as a reflection for what the PRISM regions should look like*), he and Don Eggen (both of DCNR) changed their minds and wanted to use the PACD regional map instead. Andrew clarified that he did not intend to override the workgroup’s vote; instead, he and Don came to a different perspective on the logistics of the PRISM program (for various reasons) and thought that the PACD map would be a better choice to use rather than the PDA map.

Discussion followed regarding the earlier conversation Piper Sherburne brought up about the various maps being circulated for use in deciding the PRISM program boundaries (*i.e., maps from PACD, PDA, and DEP*). *(Note: See addendum at the conclusion of these minutes showing the PACD, PDA, and DEP regional maps, for reference.)*

Andrew continued his presentation by providing the following talking points, and by stressing that “the form of the PRISM program will inform the regions we use”.

- DCNR supports the establishment of PRISMs to cover the entire geographic footprint of Pennsylvania.
  - PRISM boundaries = 6 regions, based on PACD map



- Funding comes to PDA, which creates the following positions (housed in PDA):
  - PISC coordinator
  - GIS coordinator/database clearinghouse
  - Administrative assistant
  - Outreach & education coordinator
  
- PDA then provides funds to a lead conservation district in each PRISM region. (*Note: In this scenario, an RFP process is not utilized, and instead, a delegated agreement is in place between a particular state agency providing the funding [likely PDA], and individual conservation districts*).
  - Host for PRISM staff
  - Provides office space
  
- Each PRISM region (PACD) would hire:
  - Regional director
  - GIS coordinator
  - Administrative assistant
  - 3 seasonal staff
  
- Each PRISM region (PACD) would receive funding for:
  - Vehicles, maintenance, fuel
  - Field gear
  - Backpack sprayers, PPE
  - Pesticides
  - Office supplies, phones, computers
  - Outreach materials and printing costs
  - Contract treatments
  
- Regional PRISM staff would be charged with forming partnerships with:
  - Existing Cooperative Weed Management Areas (CWMAs)
  - Municipalities, townships, counties
  - NGOs (TNC, conservancies, Conservation Landscape Initiative areas, etc.)
  - Local state agency staff (PDA, DEP, PFBC, PGC, DCNR)
  
- Regional PRISM staff will work with partners to coordinate on:
  - Deciding on invasive species projects to work on and fund
  - Seeking additional grant funding from the USDA Forest Service or other sources
  
- Regional PRISM staff will also:
  - Use seasonal staff to directly treat priority invasive species
  - Provide contract funding for other groups to target invasive species, hopefully spurring the creation of a new invasive treatment industry in PA (~ \$525,000 per PRISM region)

- PISC will:
  - Prepare an implementation plan and framework for how PRISMs would operate, including the requirement for the development of annual or five-year plans (still being discussed) and annual reports
  - Create descriptions for each of the positions listed in the PRISM budgets

Andrew also mentioned that (Kris Abell said) if we use the model that New York State uses with their PRISM program, there are a number of other potential tasks that would need to be done. (Though that will likely be a secondary discussion compared to the PA PRISM structure itself.)

Don Eggen (DCNR BOF) provided clarification that the \$525K mentioned in Andrew’s presentation goes hand-in-hand with a line item currently in Don’s draft PRISM budget. A PRISM region could decide to give some of their allocated money to an already-established CWMA in the region (i.e., a source of revenue for that CWMA), or a municipality already working on a project, etc. In this way, a PRISM and existing CWMA(s) in that same region can work together, and it would be the role of the regional entity (i.e., each individual PRISM) to push out their allocated funding into their specific/delineated region for the purpose of accomplishing tasks related to invasive species efforts. This would likely lead to more opportunity for on-the-ground efforts.

For example, Andrew Rohrbaugh mentioned that DCNR’s service foresters (*one in each county*) are able to talk to landowners and others about invasive species issues, but do not have the capacity or funding to conduct treatment efforts. However, in this model, where a PRISM and its partners (which could include an existing CWMA) work together and share their allocated funding source given by the legislature, more opportunity is given to on-the-ground management of invasive species (*which is the ultimate goal of forming a PRISM program in Pennsylvania*).

Andrew compared this model to what is already in place with PACD and their delegated agreements with state agencies. He raised the question of, “Why try to create a different model if this has worked for other efforts across the state in the past?”

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) mentioned that based on Andrew’s presentation, each PRISM would be given a certain amount of autonomy in how it would function. However, Fred raised several questions in relation to how a PRISM program could work under the model Andrew presented:

- Where are PRISMs getting their guidance from?
  - Is this an agreement with the PISC?
- Who is directing the overarching movement of these PRISMs?

Don Eggen answered Fred’s questions by drawing attention to the last section in Andrew’s plan which states that PISC will prepare an implementation plan that will guide the framework for how the PRISMs operate in Pennsylvania. This will essentially provide the needed direction that Fred was referring to. Additionally, a state agency (likely PDA) will be the funnel by which money will flow from the legislature into each individual PRISM.

Fred Strathmeyer brought up an additional concern: If conservation districts are the lead organization for each PRISM, they will be asking for a certain amount of money to cover administrative costs. Paying for something like this takes away from the ultimate goal of a PRISM program, which is to have “boots on the ground” that are tackling invasive species infestations at the local level. Essentially, Fred advised not to spend too much money on administrative costs if the PRISM model that Andrew Rohrbaugh proposed is adopted. Don Eggen responded, saying that his draft budget supplies additional people to do this type of work (i.e., 10% to cover indirect overhead costs). Fred countered, saying that overhead costs typically run at 30% or more.

Discussion proceeded on potential negotiations that could be worked out to minimize overall costs for a PRISM program, and to ensure that the PRISM budget and associated implementation plan are thoughtfully created with these (*and other*) considerations in mind.

**MOTION:** Don Eggen (DCNR BOF) moved that PISC accept DCNR’s plan/approach for developing PRISMs in Pennsylvania. Note: DCNR’s approach includes the use of the PACD map as the boundary delineations for the PRISMs. Scott Bearer (PGC) seconded the motion. ***No final vote on this motion.***

Discussion by Council members proceeded regarding this motion.

Ruth Welliver (PDA) asked if the Council was voting on the DCNR’s plan exactly as it was presented today, or if there were parts of the plan that could be amended later on? Discussion followed regarding the work still needed to be done by the PRISM workgroup regarding the implementation plan, and likely the need to shift things around as new ideas are brought forth and the framework of the program continues to evolve.

Don Eggen stressed that the main “shift” in DCNR’s plan is working through the conservation districts (*rather than an alternative system*).

Amy Jewitt (WPC/PNHP) asked if Don Eggen would be willing to amend his motion to say that the DCNR approach for developing PRISMs in Pennsylvania could be used as a “framework”, as she was not comfortable voting on the motion as it currently stands. Don Eggen agreed to Amy’s request.

**AMENDED MOTION:** Don Eggen (DCNR BOF) moved that PISC accept DCNR’s plan/approach in using conservation districts to implement PRISMs in Pennsylvania. DCNR’s plan/approach will be used as a framework to create a formal implementation plan in relation to a future Pennsylvania PRISM program. Note: DCNR’s approach includes the use of the PACD map as the boundary delineations for the PA PRISMs. (*See map below*). Scott Bearer (PGC) seconded the original motion. Piper Sherburne seconded the amended motion. **Motion approved.**



- Secure a dedicated source of funding to implement a regional invasive species management strategy in Pennsylvania (presumably a PRISM model).

### ***Economic Impact Study of Invasive Species in Pennsylvania***

One of the main components of the work being done by this subcommittee is an economic impact study. This workgroup understands that without a formal economic analysis in place to provide to legislators, there will be obstacles in raising awareness for invasive species management in our state. In other words, right now we just don't have the statewide economic impact data to make a solid argument for the need to fund invasive species initiatives in Pennsylvania.

This workgroup originally met with a consulting firm, Burns & McDonnell, to form a scope and estimated budget for an economic impact study on the effects of invasive species in Pennsylvania. After some discussion amongst the workgroup, it was decided to shift gears and instead approach the Center for Rural Pennsylvania (CRPA, a non-partisan research "arm" of the General Assembly that conducts grant programs aimed at research on issues affecting rural Pennsylvania and rural Pennsylvania's economy). The CRPA provided positive feedback regarding details for this request to fund an economic analysis.

The workgroup initially wanted to utilize the CRPA's established grant programs to issue a formal RFP for the economic impact study. However, after further discussion, the CRPA said that an economic analysis will not fit into their existing programs, but they would still be willing to take on this project (outside of their established grant programs) because the issue resonated with them.

At this time, the workgroup is facing a couple different challenges, and will likely require assistance from PISC. First, we need to demonstrate that there's a lot of stakeholders involved in this issue from PISC that have "skin in the game" as this will demonstrate to the CRPA why an economic analysis is an important undertaking. Mike Nerozzi asked that after today's meeting, Council members go back to their respective organizations and ask if they would be willing to provide letters of support and/or contribute funding as match to the CRPA for conducting the economic analysis. No specific monetary amounts were mentioned, but Mike Nerozzi stressed that we want to have this option of support/funding from PISC "in our back pocket" in case we get approached about this down the road by the CRPA.

Note: A request to CRPA to fund a Pennsylvania invasive species economic analysis will be submitted to the CRPA Board which includes legislators, representatives of the PSSHE [Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education] system, faculty and researchers from state-related universities, and NGOs that deal with rural affairs issues.

Additionally, the workgroup needs to assist CRPA in identifying a Pennsylvania University faculty member (i.e., PSSHE schools or state-related schools) that has the necessary experience to help lead the economic analysis project. (Note: According to the CRPA bylaws, any project

their organization funds must be led by a PSSHE or state-related faculty member.) Help from the Council is needed regarding suggestions for potential faculty members to lead this effort, and any leads should be sent to Kris Abell so they can be presented at our next workgroup meeting. Note: Some members of the Legislative subcommittee are already reaching out to potential faculty members, but the more suggestions we can get, the better.

PISC also needs to narrow the scope of the economic analysis. We originally pitched the idea as a statewide economic study; however, that may be too large and unwieldy a goal for the CRPA to tackle in a timely and cost-effective manner. Perhaps the Council can form a subcommittee to help narrow the scope for the study to make sure it's something the CRPA can afford to undertake and be completed in a timely manner to then take to the Legislature as part of PISC's overall legislative and advocacy efforts.

Next steps regarding this effort include:

- Mike Nerozzi is currently drafting a letter to request the economic study be funded by the CRPA.
- Other Legislative workgroup members are gathering species-specific case studies where economic impact data is already available. This will help provide examples to the CRPA to bolster the argument of why this statewide economic study is important.
- Working on a draft RFP to provide to the CRPA (so if their Board approves of commissioning this study, this RFP would help guide that process for them).
- Identify a faculty member that would be the best to lead an economic analysis project.

One of the primary goals of the Legislative subcommittee is to build legislative support; however, that goal has been put on hold until an invasive species economic study can be completed and issues surrounding the program budget can be resolved. Once these two things occur, we can then go to the Legislature with the most complete information that we have. In other words, we don't want to start prematurely engaging legislators and making an ask for dedicated funding without having the evidence needed to support our argument for why funding is needed. By waiting for the time being, legislators can (*in the future*) make an informed decision of what an appropriation would look like.

### ***Rapid Response Disaster Readiness Fund***

The Legislative workgroup has been working to develop an RFP for the Rapid Response (RR) Disaster Readiness Account. We recognize this funding request mechanism is needed so the account can be relied upon to quickly respond to threats, newly introduced outbreaks, and sudden spreads of invasive species. This RFP would allow conservation districts and possibly other groups to apply for grants when rapid response is needed. This process (*of developing an RFP for the RR account*) is already begun within the workgroup.

Jim Grazio (PA DEP) asked who would be funding the RR fund? Would this be PFBC? Mike Nerozzi responded, saying that PFBC would not be funding the account. Rather, the account was established legislatively in 2019, so it's under PDA. The Legislative workgroup is merely

providing suggested guidelines and creating this RFP so organizations can apply to PDA to use some of the funds in the account.

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) clarified that the funding in the RR account was part of the \$24M that PDA received through the Farm Bill in 2019. The challenge is that the RR line in the Farm Bill allocation had dedicated use for it. Essentially, funds from this account can only be used on what is seen as a “RR need”. This will be a bit of a challenge (*i.e., identifying what is a RR need*). However, PISC members should understand that this account is ready to be used for RR purposes, and the RFP will be a helpful mechanism to distribute the funding to organizations willing and able to properly utilize it.

### ***Review and Discussion***

Piper Sherburne (PACD) asked if a template letter (*of support*) could be created that everyone could use so we’re all speaking with one voice and addressing the same issues that you want us to cover? Mike Nerozzi responded, saying that at this point, we’re not directly engaging with legislators. We’re still trying to get the economic impact study done first before doing outreach to make an argument for dedicated funding. However, when we get to that point (of being ready to do outreach to legislators), we can definitely circulate a template that can be used by organizations on PISC.

Kris Abell (PDA) clarified that the Legislative subcommittee is asking the Council (*after today’s meeting*) to identify possible funding to help support the economic impact study, and send suggestions to him for potential faculty members to lead the economic impact project.

Kris also circled back to the PRISM conversation, wanting to make sure Johan Berger can commit to being part of the PRISM workgroup.

**ACTION ITEM:** At this point in the meeting, Johan already signed off of Skype, so Kris will follow-up with him after today’s meeting regarding his involvement in the PRISM workgroup.

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## **Website Workgroup Update**

### ***Updates to PISC Website***

Kris Abell (PDA) started off by saying that minor updates were made to the PISC website (*since the June PISC meeting*), and the minutes from the June meeting are posted on the website. In addition to the minutes, we’ve started including PDFs of presentations given during PISC meetings (*on the website*) as well as documents and other resources mentioned or shared during the meetings.

### ***Presentation on PISC Invasive Species Projects ArcGIS Online Story Map***

Amy Jewitt (WPC/PNHP) gave a short presentation on the current development of an ArcGIS online story map highlighting invasive species projects undertaken (or currently happening) by PISC members. **Note: A screenshot from the draft story map is included as an addendum at the**

*conclusion of these minutes.* Note: A link to this story map will not be available to PISC members or anyone in the general public until the story map is fully completed.

Amy emphasized that this ArcGIS online story map is not a website, even though it may resemble one. Story maps are a stand-alone product created by Esri that take visual and mapping components and allow them to come together in an online platform in a visually-appealing way to tell a story. Amy also emphasized that the story map she was showing today to Council members is still in draft form.

Scott Bearer (PGC) and Jeff Wagner (WPC/PNHP) both asked if there was a way to access the story map in its current form so folks can view it and provide feedback. Amy responded, saying that only content contributors are able to view the story map currently. Due to technicalities of how story maps function, as soon as Amy begins making edits to the story map, it becomes unviewable to the general public (*which would include members of the Council*). However, there's currently a window of time that contributors can view the story map now in its draft form. Amy mentioned that the timeline to complete and publish the story map will be December 2020. At that time, it will be viewable by anyone.

Kris Abell clarified that members of the Website working group were each assigned to particular members of the Council (*i.e., that filled out the survey, which lead to the creation of this story map*) to obtain content for inclusion in the story map. If anyone on the Council was not contacted that wishes to provide content for the story map, please contact Kris or Amy.

Amy responded to several questions/comments submitted in the Skype Chat box. They are as follows:

- 1) Don Eggen (DCNR BOF) and Sarah Whitney (PA Sea Grant) asked if the story map would eventually be posted on the PISC website. Answer: Yes.
- 2) Ruth Welliver (PDA) asked if Amy could send to Council members a table of contents summarizing the updates currently provided in the story map. Answer: Yes.
- 3) April Moore (USDA Forest Service, Allegheny National Forest) asked if the story map could be sent out in PDF form to folks wishing to view it that way (*since it's difficult to share out with others, other than content contributors, at this time*). Amy responded that because the story map is quite long in its current form, it would likely be difficult to create as a PDF.
- 4) Victoria Challingsworth (Elk County Conservation District) asked if there was a map of the whole state (and various projects within the state), included in the story map that will allow folks to see what projects may be happening near them (like an interactive map)? Amy responded that this type of map could potentially be incorporated into the story map, but only if all the projects/updates mentioned have a specific location that can be pinpointed on a map.

Kris Abell provided clarification about where on the PISC website the story map would “live” once completed. He explained that in its current form, the PISC website has four main buttons providing navigation options to various resources (*see image below*). The goal of the Website



working group is to add a fifth button to the PISC website that would provide a hyperlink to the story map, as this would help provide a “spotlight” for it on the website.



5) Mary Walsh (WPC/PNHP) commented in the Chat box that a story map is basically like a newsletter with web addresses/web links. Amy clarified this point, showing how, for example, viewers of the story map can click on a link for zebra mussels and be taken to the PA Sea Grant website where they can learn more about zebra mussels. (Note: The story map is filled with various web links to help provide as much information in each section/update as possible.)

6) Scott Bearer (PGC) asked if he could receive a link to the story map for review purposes (since PGC did provide an update included in the story map). Amy responded that Scott could reach out to Kris or Amy to follow up on this request.

7) Chris Urban (PFBC) commented that he’s surveyed other work units within PFBC and has info to share for inclusion in the story map. Amy responded that he can email her directly with any info he has.

### **New Business**

#### ***Letter to the Governor***

Kris Abell (PDA) reminded Council members that is a requirement of PISC to submit a biennial report to the Governor of Pennsylvania on the Council’s activities. To date, Kris has shared multiple drafts with Council members asking for comments, the latest of which was shared about two weeks ago.

Amy Jewitt (WPC/PNHP) asked how the letter to the Governor would be delivered. Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) responded that the letter would go to Secretary Redding’s office (for review), and from there, it would be sent to the Governor’s office.

**MOTION:** Don Eggen (DCNR BOF) moved to accept and finalize the most recent (*draft*) letter to be submitted to the Governor. Jeff Wagner (WPC/PNHP) seconded the motion. **Motion approved.**

### ***Weed-Free Forage Certification Program***

Kris Abell (PDA) mentioned that the North American Invasive Species Management Association (NAISMA) proposes to submit a Landscape Scale Restoration Grant for Pennsylvania to fund a pilot program of the Weed-Free Forage Certification Program, possibly in cooperation with New York State, in 2021. Note: In addition to Pennsylvania, NAISMA is interested in seeing other states on the east coast implement a Weed Free Forage Certification Program.

In talking with others (i.e., Andrew Rohrbaugh [DCNR BOF] and Johnny Zook [PDA]) about the logistics of this type of program in Pennsylvania, a few questions still remain unanswered that will need to be figured out:

1. Who's going to do the inspections?
2. Who will buy the product?

Johnny Zook (PDA) has made a number of contacts (i.e., growers/producers) that are interested in participating in this program, but have the concern that once they produce this certified product, who will buy it? In order to remedy this concern, there may be a need to include (as a requirement) in DCNR, DEP, Game Commission, and PennDOT grants/projects/contracts that buyers of forage must purchase only weed-free forage.

Andy Ernst (PA Farm Bureau) commented that as long as we have a market for this type of product, it's a good move for the agricultural industry in Pennsylvania overall. In talking with Johnny Zook, he's confident that we'd have some growers available. However, the question remains: Will weed free forage be mandated in projects? In response to Andy's comments, Kris Abell commented that perhaps the PA Farm Bureau is in a position to help create a market for this product, and to make that known to different agencies and members of PA Farm Bureau.

Andrew Rohrbaugh (DCNR BOF) had hoped that he and Kelly Sitch (*Andrew's colleague at DCNR BOF*) would be approved to do some of the initial inspections needed to get a weed-free forage program off the ground in Pennsylvania. However, they did not receive permission to do this work. Hence, they have now gone to using the Landscape Scale Restoration Grant to get a pilot program going in our state. Hopefully this grant would provide funding for some of the initial inspections. Andrew mentioned he and others are still hopeful that DCNR can work with folks doing projects on DCNR lands. Perhaps some pilot projects could be done that would require weed-free material.

Kris Abell inquired if DCNR had discussed the possibility of writing into future grants and projects (as a requirement) the use of weed-free material? Andrew Rohrbaugh responded, saying

that DCNR's hope is to first do a pilot project in order to demonstrate the need the certified product before including it as a requirement in all of DCNR's contracts.

Fred Strathmeyer (PDA) asked Andrew Rohrbaugh if DCNR has any farmers that are growing a weed-free product for them (*in order to conduct a pilot project within DCNR*)? Andrew responded, saying that's a task for Johnny Zook to handle. DCNR would be working with individuals doing projects on DCNR lands that need straw as a mulching material. These would be the folks that DCNR would work with in regards to their own (*internal*) pilot program. Moving forward, Fred Strathmeyer clarified that this overall project will be a collaboration between DCNR and PDA.

Fred mentioned that another challenge that needs to be worked through (*as far as logistics*) is worker's compensation. This would have to worked out in a pilot program and gradually implemented over time.

April Moore (USDA Forest Service, Allegheny National Forest) mentioned that the Allegheny National Forest (ANF) would be interested in being a buyer of weed-free forage and being part of discussions related to a pilot project, especially if it were to take place somewhere near the four counties where the Allegheny National Forest is located. Kris Abell said he would be sure to include folks from the ANF in future discussions on this topic.

Kris Abell asked if Scott Bearer (PGC) and others from the PA Game Commission would be interested in using weed-free material on game lands, to which Scott Bearer said PGC would be interested.

Kris Abell mentioned if Pennsylvania does partner with NAISMA on a weed-free forage certification program, NAISMA also has a gravel certification program in place and is working on a certified mulch program too. All of these components could be part of the program that gets implemented in Pennsylvania. However, for now, weed-free forage has been the main focus because it will likely be an easy sell and be beneficial (financially) to Pennsylvania farmers and growers.

### ***Grant Workgroup Now Established***

Kris Abell (PDA) mentioned that funding is always an issue as far as what PISC can accomplish in relation to invasive species efforts. Therefore, a new workgroup has been formed with a focus on identifying and obtaining funds (*for this purpose*). Members of this new workgroup include Don Eggen (DCNR BOF), Sarah Whitney (PA Sea Grant), Mary Walsh (WPC/PNHP), and Felicia Lamphere (PA DEP).

The objectives of this workgroup include:

- Creating a database of invasive species-related grants available for state agencies and organizations (such as those agencies/orgs represented on the Council) to apply for.

- Developing capacity for PISC to apply for grants.
- Gathering and curating information and resources.
- Providing information on the PISC website.

Kris Abell asked if anyone in the meeting today is aware of any funding/grant opportunities? If so, please let him know so this information can be included in the database. He also welcomed others to participate in this new workgroup.

### ***Farm Show 2021***

Kris Abell (PDA) mentioned that the upcoming Farm Show will be held virtually (*due to COVID-19*). Since PISC has always had a presence at this event in the past, the question at hand is how will PISC participate this year? Ruth Welliver (PDA) had already suggested doing a virtual panel discussion and Q&A with council members or other representatives. We could also host webinars.

**ACTION ITEM:** Kris strongly encouraged that a temporary work group be formed to discuss next steps in relation to PISC's involvement in the 2021 Farm Show.

Amy Jewitt (WPC/PNHP) suggested that PISC host a webinar that would discuss the updates listed in the PISC Invasive Species Projects story map. The people presenting in this webinar would be the individuals (*or another representatives*) that provided the content for their respective organization's update in the story map. Kris Abell thought this was a terrific idea, though mentioned it would hinge on the people who provided the updates to be willing to participate in the webinar.

April Moore (USDA Forest Service, Allegheny National Forest) requested clarification on the dates for the 2021 Farm Show. According to information online, the dates are January 9-16, 2021.

Ruth Welliver (PDA) volunteered herself to be on the Farm Show 2021 workgroup. She mentioned liking the suggestion of unveiling the PISC story map during Farm Show week, and doing a webinar in conjunction with it. Andrew Rohrbaugh (DCNR BOF) also volunteered to be on this workgroup. Kris Abell will follow up with all Council members via email after today's meeting, asking for additional help on this workgroup.

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### **Discussion and Concluding Remarks**

April Moore (USDA Forest Service, Allegheny National Forest) asked for clarification on what it means for the Farm Show to be held virtually? Will there still be a PISC booth in the Farm Show complex? Fred Strathmeyer responded, saying there will be nothing at the Farm Show itself; no physical presence there. Everything will be entirely virtual. Logistics and technical considerations are still being worked out (*by PDA*).

Amy Jewitt (WPC/PNHP) asked if PISC can get a notice when the Governor receives the biennial letter/report from the Council. Fred Strathemeyer said he'll make sure this happens.

Kris Abell said a final "thank you" to the Allegheny Plateau Invasive Plant Management Area (APIPMA), and welcomed them once again as a new member to the Council.

**MOTION:** Don Eggen (DCNR BOF) moved to adjourn the meeting. Jeff Wagner (WPC/PNHP) seconded the motion. **Meeting adjourned.**

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*Next PISC Meeting*

Tuesday, December 8, 2020 at 10:00am via Skype

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Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Amy Jewitt, WPC/PNHP

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DRAFT

## **Amendments and Addendums:**

On September 16, 2020, Kris Abell sent the following email correspondence to all Council representatives:

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Dear Council Members,

During our quarterly meeting yesterday, the Allegheny Plateau Invasive Plant Management Area was officially voted in as a new member of the Council. The Executive Order establishing the Council stipulates that it shall be made up of 7 state agencies and 14 members of the public. I mistakenly reported that the current compliment stood at 10 members of the public. With the addition the Allegheny Plateau Invasive Plant Management Area, the Council now has 13 members of the public represented.

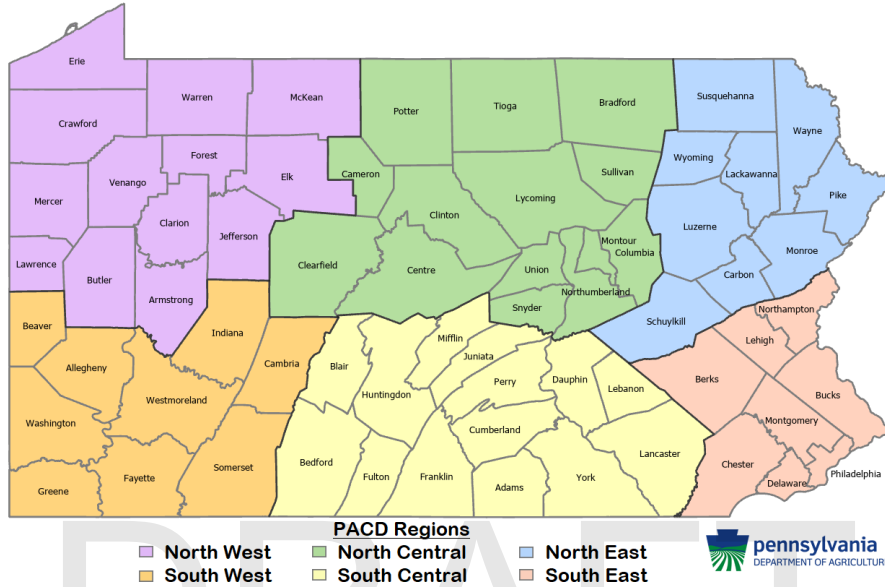
It was proposed that a Nomination Committee be formed to identify the remaining open public seat on the Council. The Nomination Committee members are, Jeff Wagner of Western PA Conservancy, Kate Harms of PA Lake Management Society, and Felicia Lamphere of DEP. Thanks to each for serving on this committee. Other Council members that wish to be on the committee, please get in touch with me.

Thank you

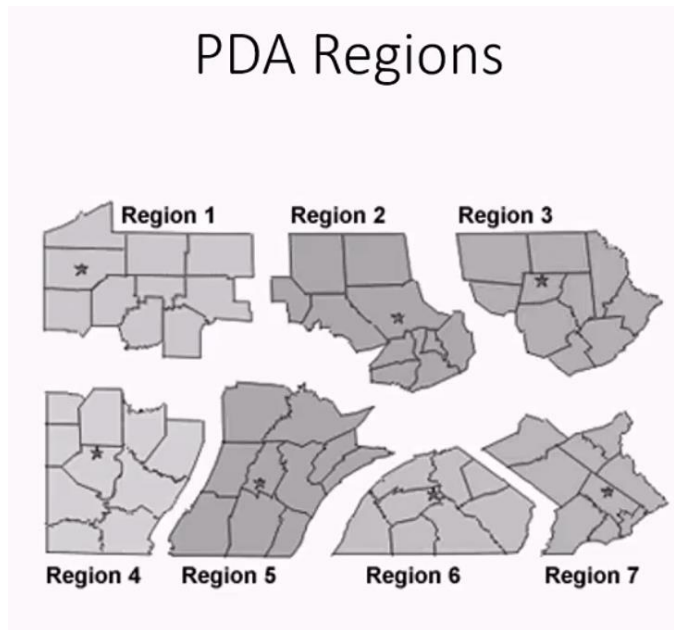
Kristopher Abell  
Coordinator, [Governor's Invasive Species Council](#)  
Bureau of Plant Industry  
Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture  
2301 N Cameron St, Harrisburg, PA 17110  
717.787.2227  
[krabell@pa.gov](mailto:krabell@pa.gov)

**Maps:**

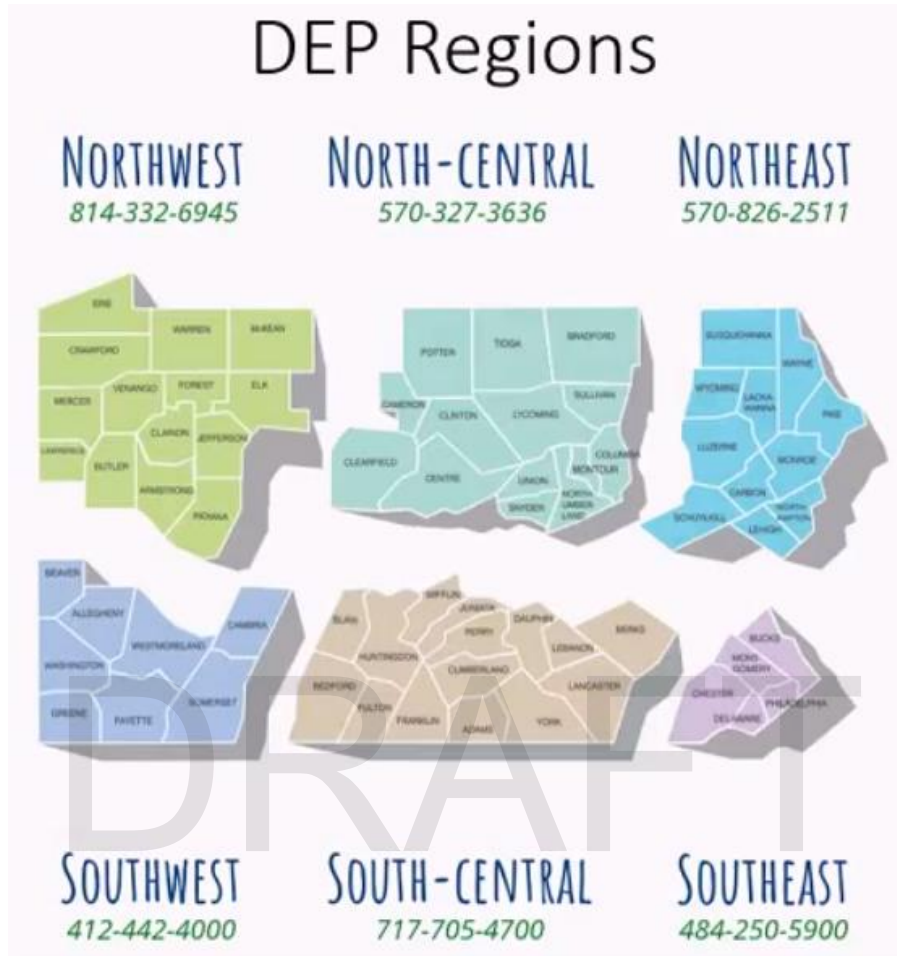
Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts (PACD) Regional Map:



Pennsylvania Department of Agricultural (PDA) Regional Map:



Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP) Regional Map:



***Following page:***  
Example update provided in the (draft) PISC Invasive Species  
Projects ArcGIS online story map



# Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

## Aquatic Invasive Species Monitoring in the Pennsylvania Lake Erie Watershed



PA DEP Biologist Jim Grazio holding a 69 lb., 48" grass carp. Collected in 2018 while conducting AIS monitoring in Presque Isle Bay, Sara's Cove.

Update provided by Jim Grazio, Biologist with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP)

### Project Description:

Pennsylvania DEP biologists based out of the Tom Ridge Environmental Center in Erie, Pennsylvania conduct annual early detection and monitoring surveys for aquatic invasive species (AIS) throughout Pennsylvania's Lake Erie watershed. The monitoring program was created with support from the federal Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). The primary goal of the AIS monitoring program is to detect new occurrences of high-risk AIS in order to respond to the new occurrence(s) as rapidly as possible. An additional goal of the program is to monitor the status and spread of established AIS populations.

Monitoring primarily occurs within Lake Erie and its watershed, with a special focus on ecologically unique Presque Isle Bay. Monitoring also takes place in high priority waterbodies proximal to the Lake Erie basin. The AIS monitoring program emphasizes the detection of non-native invasive fishes, plants, and invertebrates. Conventional biological sampling techniques are utilized, including electrofishing and seining for fishes, rake tosses for aquatic plants, and nets and traps for invertebrates. Underwater videography is often used to supplement the more conventional monitoring approaches.



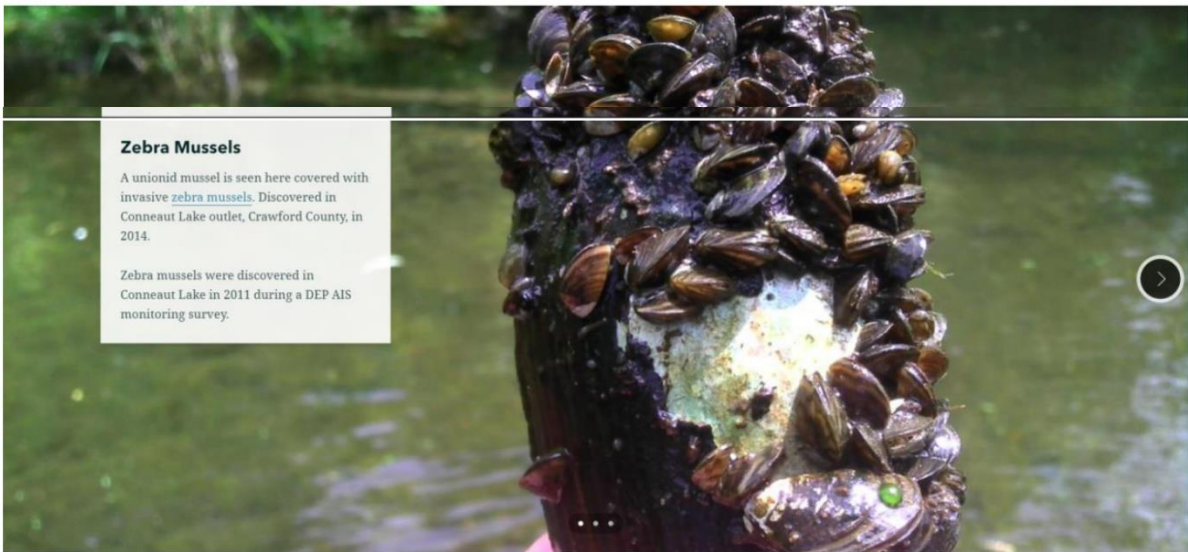
Underwater footage taken by PA DEP on August 16, 2019 while monitoring for starry stonewort at the Presque Isle Lagoons.

Notable accomplishments of the AIS monitoring program include the discovery of [European rudd](#) (*Scardinius erythrophthalmus*) in Presque Isle Bay, [zebra mussels](#) (*Dreissena polymorpha*) in Edinboro Lake and Conneaut Lake, and [round gobies](#) (*Neogobius melanostomus*) in Lake LeBoeuf.

Additional information regarding the DEP's AIS monitoring program can be obtained by contacting contacting Jim Grazio.

[Email Jim Grazio](#)

The following slideshow includes several photos taken during DEP's AIS monitoring.



### Zebra Mussels

A unionid mussel is seen here covered with invasive zebra mussels. Discovered in Conneaut Lake outlet, Crawford County, in 2014.

Zebra mussels were discovered in Conneaut Lake in 2011 during a DEP AIS monitoring survey.